

Holguin Robert. "Artist will create "bridge of light" over U.S.-Mexico border," *KFox14*, May 16, 2019



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by Robert Holguin



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EL PASO, Texas (KFOX14) — On tonight's edition of *Built in the Borderland*, we got to know Rafael Lozano-Hemmer.

He is a Mexican-born artist who lives in Canada.

Lozano-Hemmer works with electronics to develop large-scale installations that are focused on public participation.

He was in El Paso this week for a screening of a documentary called "Megalodemocrat," which chronicles some of the work he has done around the world.

That includes installations in Mexico City, Dublin and Rotterdam.

The screening at the Alamo Drafthouse on Wednesday was also a preview for an ambitious new project that he's planning to build in El Paso and Juarez.

It will be called the Border Tuner and it will use robotic search lights on both sides of the border to create a bridge of lights. But it will also allow for public interactivity, which is his hallmark.

"The project is going to be a set of search lights that are going to be on both sides of the border," Lozano-Hemmer said. "In the Chamizal Park in Ciudad Juarez and Bowie High School on the U.S. side. And these lights will actually be controlled by a little tuning device that you can turn and as you turn it the lights scan the horizon. Now if my lights in Mexico intersect with yours in the US they create a bridge of light. The computer knows this and automatically it opens up a microphone and a speaker between the two of us so now I can speak to you through the light and you can speak to me. We can have a conversation. If all of a sudden I don't like what you're saying, I just tune you out and tune somebody else either in the other country or in my own country. There are six of these stations. Three on each side. And the idea is that the light show only happens through the voice of people. So we are inviting people to take up these open mics and talk to each other across these light beams that can

be seen from a ten-mile radius.”

Penny Balkin Bach, a director with the Association for Public Art, had this to say: “I think that the substance and the concept behind the project is deep. But the visual idea of it is exciting and inspiring and so you apply those feelings to the nature of the border and all of a sudden I think people will see it differently.”

The Border Tuner will take shape in November of this year.